

After Words with Tom Hayden (SDS)

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Former California State Senator Tom Hayden talked about his book, Writings for a Democratic Society: The Tom Hayden Reader, published by City Lights Publishers. The book collects Mr. Hayden's pieces on various social

and political issues that he has engaged in since the early 1960s. As a founding member of Students for a Democratic Society, Mr. Hayden was a prominent figure in the movement against the Vietnam War and was one of the eight people charged with conspiracy after leading street demonstrations in Chicago during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Later he served 18 years in the California State Assembly and Senate, and more recently has been active in preventing gang violence and ending the war in Iraq. He was interviewed on the C-SPAN BookTV Bus while at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

The guest interviewer was Jon Wiener, professor of history at the University of California, Irvine. Professor Wiener's books include Historians in Trouble and Gimme Some Truth: The John Lennon FBI Files. Most recently he is the editor of Conspiracy in the Streets: The Extraordinary Trial of the Chicago Eight, for which Tom Hayden wrote the foreword.

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coming up next book TV presents afterwards an hour-long interview program where we invite guests hose to interview authors this week Tom Hayden founding member of students for a Democratic Society and former California State Senator talks about his book writings for a Democratic Society the book collects mr. hayden's pieces on various social and political issues that he is engaged in since the early 1960s from his opposition to the Vietnam War to his more recent work on gang violence mr Hayden is interviewed by John Weiner professor of history at university of california irvine professor weiners books include historians in trouble and gimme some truth the John Lennon FBI files most recently is the editor of conspiracy in the streets the extraordinary trial the Chicago 84 which Tom Hayden wrote the foreword at tom you were a writer before you were a political activist what was your starting point as a writer I've always been a writer one doesn't know where things begin but I was I guess I had some need to be heard and the adults the teachers the authorities weren't listening to me or to us so that would have been a starting point and I guess I found it easy to learn writing who what when where why that's the first paragraph that you're taught the structure of first paragraph in journalism so I went to took journalism classes in high school and we had an underground paper this is in the 50s it was like it was modeled after mad magazine ok and and we had an overground

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magazine ok and and we had an overground paper which is the school paper and we're in the United States are we a nice is a suburb of suburb of Detroit called royal oak and the big secret which I didn't learn until a couple of years ago when a graduate student uncovered it was that the town was among the first suburbs and it was racially sealed as a white suburb by secret covenant so so I was a writer I was a sports writer because that was what was available and I liked sports and then I became the editor of the paper and I think also I was a nonconformist so the nonconformity led me towards critical journalism and and also in time

towards activism but if there's something about one's nature it writing would come first for me not politics or the rest and then what what changed your mind about the kind of writing you want to do what led you to leave the objective mode of who what why and when and become the the advocate the pamphleteer the movement writer well there was no movement so with journalism there were two choices there was you wrote editorials all very pompous role telling everybody what to think and then you wrote news which was objective and obviously there's more than those two choices but it took some time for me to realize that so I started to get interested in interpretive writing investigative writing that was less than a commitment to activism but I started writing about activism I went to the Bay Area in 1960 and I wrote

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went to the Bay Area in 1960 and I wrote about the growth of the student movement there which completely shocked my administration back in Ann Arbor because they thought that this news would spread like some kind of contagion which it did I guess and then I went to the Democratic convention here in Los Angeles and just as August 1960 when Martin Luther King was marching for a civil rights platform plank and I went and I interviewed him on the March and the effect it had on me was I realized that I was in it for the ambition for the Thomas Haden byline and he was in it for much deeper reasons and I think at that point I was I began thinking about whether I should stop writing about action but take action and and I had an interesting rationale I thought which was consistent with being a writer the the theory was that only by taking action sometimes can you create evidence that wasn't there before about whether something is going to happen or not so keeping yourself out of it was lessening the possibilities of the action and taking place with a positive outcome and so I thought I'm I'm I mean I'm caught I this is it to be on the sidelines to be objective is to contribute a little more to the establishment than to the activists to get involved I risk losing my critical objective abilities so then the question became well how can I get involved fully and still retain a certain kind of independence and I don't think I've

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independence and I don't think I've moved much beyond that position was 50 years ago 40 50 years ago yeah Jerry Brown once told me the the Jesuits had this idea of contemplation in action that that was their discipline that comes close to it sociologists would call it a participatory observation participant observer being a participant observer I guess you could call it participatory writing for a participatory society but it's it's um it's not easy to resolve and I noticed that that in this book of writings going back over 50 years up till now till the Iraq I tend to be more comfortable being a narrator but my experience in social movements I feel gives me an invaluable edge over observers historians newspaper reporters because I've been there I am there I've done that I know what that feels like and so I have a better ability to evaluate what's going to happen I think then somebody who has only observed but it's it's a marginal difference now you're your best known mmm your best not in this let's call it early period for the Port Huron Statement which was kind of the defining document of the student movement the new left in the United States but even before the Port Huron Statement you were you were sort of a becoming a more engaged writer write uh how did that happen and I know you the the book has some examples of these pre port huron bustle right I was sent by a student for democratic society to the south for fifty bucks a week I lived

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the south for fifty bucks a week I lived in Georgia I was in love and she was a civil rights worker for the YWCA out of Austin and she too was a writer and a poet and so I think I saw my task as a Tom Paine kind of pamphleteer I will observe people fighting for their lives risking their lives in the worst parts of Mississippi and then I'll publish the pamphlet and I'll tour northern cities and campuses and I'll speak about what I've what I've seen so the pamphleteer phase in your your book that Tom Hayden reader has some examples of your writing from those early days I wonder if you could ask us to if you could read us a sample I think port urine is more famous it might read you the the the first sentence of port here sure give you this no there's a strange sense of how unorthodox I was as an advocate who they wanted me to stir it up a little bit but my first

sentence was we are people of this generation bred in at least modest comfort house now in universities looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit not exactly the Communist Manifesto it says you can see that that's kind of a distant writing but people seem to think that it did speak for them now the the youthful idealism I wrote something in Mississippi and 61 that was called the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in action it was about a killing and some demonstrations

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about a killing and some demonstrations but the subtitle dignity for the enslaved and for us all so you can see this robust romantic thing but earlier in 61 I wrote a preliminary for the port here in statement and I I can't tell if it's sophomoric or it's it's not embarrassing but it's it's it's let's go for it it's a young person's right what is desperately needed I think is the person of vision and clarity who sees both the model society and the pitfalls that precede its attainment and who will not destroy his vision for short run gains but instead hold it out for all to see as the furthest dream and perimeter of human possibility vision and clarity I sounds great too that's right and there's one other part of this that I thought was noteworthy in terms of the how these movements developed because they were so different than the movements that were built around isms great faith and so on and I am beset by doubt at this point some perhaps are we all we doubt our ability to affect change we doubt our ability to understand enough we doubt the validity of time-honored liberal notions we doubt the right and wrong of it and I don't recommend that we banished out not that there where there's a will there's a way but I would suggest that it is possible and necessary to think and act provisionally yet strongly in the midst of our doubts we must begin to see doubt not as a reason for inaction but as a reminder of our FAL ability fantastic I

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reminder of our FAL ability fantastic I think there's some bad influence here I think it's good so a thank you very much for that reading the Port Huron Statement 1962 it was published to say right it was written it was drafted at the end of 61 it was circulated in the spring of 62 and it was published by mini a graft meehans for 25 cents a copy I think in June 62 this would be for Kennedy was assassinated yo before civil rights had become quite mainstream before the march on Washington before the Betty Friedan book about women's liberation it was still a period that I think of and anybody that went through it as a period of that beautiful innocence that James Joyce wrote about in the portrait of the artist it's really you can't understand the sixties without understanding this brief utopian moment well I want to ask you more about that one moment because the Port Huron Statement has turned out to be an incredibly important historical document if there is a manifesto of the student movement of the first part of the 60s that's it was and I remember when it came out it was just incredibly eloquent and a visionary a call on students to move away from apathy and out towards participatory democracy you called it this is the writing of a very young person how are you able to write something so eloquent in so visionary at such a young age well I think that you write differently when you're young when you're middle-aged and more experienced when you're old you're looking back and I don't rank them as more or less important but yeah this is the writing

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important but yeah this is the writing of an of an inspired a group of people like myself and it came from a combination of what we had what we had seen in terms of the apathy all around us and the utter apathy of the suburbs from which we came versus the bravery and courage of young people our age nearly all of them black in the South who were standing up and doing something about their oppression and and I think it takes that friction you know between your surface reality and what's starting to happen it sparks a creativity and if it rang true to people I think it's because it was simply a cycling back to the audience what they already knew or coming to know because they were starting to awaken it wasn't a foreign set of ideas dropped on them to to learn and study study groups or something like that and how important was it that this was a statement of a group not just that one one writer the the value of having one person principal author is you get a certain consistency consistency of tone and style yes which it definitely had and then and then the value of a group

is that you'd get much more buy-in and participation and a sense of ownership that this is about us we we created this vision the downside of that is it can become more clunky as things are at it I'll tell you a funny example that that didn't really harm it I I had written in the section on the economy that we that

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the section on the economy that we that I had a we I think it was all couched as we were supportive of small innovative businesses community businesses and then my draft would go to a group that SAT around in the grass and and read and argued and kind of rewrote it not stylistically but as if it was a constitutional proposal with amendments well right and so Rob berlitch who's still active in health care in New York City and was then the editor of the student paper in Austin Texas many of us were campus editors he brought back his group's revisions of the economic section and said the amendment number one is an amendment by brother Karl Marx to brother Tom Hayden's draft on the economy may I forget it really didn't go beyond you know kind of uh waterdown democratic socialism public ownership of key assets of the economy but it eliminated the reference to small business good supplement here you loot you gain you lose when you collectivize the writing effort now the Port Huron Statement didn't just come out of a political moment it also came out of a world of writing other articles other authors you were also an intellectual as well as an activist who were the intellectuals who you were on your mind that's a good question that the 60s are remembered very much of through our projections and not in their totality they're there to their totality the the example I have in mind that is that it was an inspiring moment in religion particularly the opening in the Catholic Church patcham and terrace the coming of a Catholic president for the first time in the United States and the civil

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in the United States and the civil rights movement in the south was a largely a church-based movement with heavy Jewish support from the north and the most lasting impact was called liberation theology which was growing through community organizing in base communities among the peasantry in Latin America and Central America it was a very powerful movement and for a time it became the majority movement in the Catholic Church officially sanctioned in 1968 as a matter of fact and the Port Huron Statement has to be located there there's a spirituality to the Port Huron Statement a there's a sense of values there's language that's very reminiscent of these early Catholic teachings the linkage between you know liberation in the hair and that in the here and now as well as you know in the larger scheme of eternity and I don't remember the sequence but I think Port Heron came first but there was a woman named Mary varela who became a Latina organizer around health issues and still is in northern New Mexico she was very influential but at the time she was with the young Catholic Worker I think that was the name of it and she had some of the writings of the church in her pocket or her purse that she carried around with her and people were seen in small groups comparing you know the the language because we had to make a decision on what we thought was human nature itself big big question yeah you don't want to leave that out of a manifesto and we thought that the the view of niebuhr and some of the you know the darker view of views of human nature led into a sort of

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views of human nature led into a sort of political economy that was based on fencing people in and to the Federalist Papers notion of containing the egos and preventing selfish interests from arising and we thought that was counter pose to liberation which meant the audacity of hope shall we say go tell you and we were on that side of that argument although of course throughout it all I remained doubtful of all the basics but there there was some by osmosis or other means there was some linkage between the stirrings at Port Huron in that statement and what was going on in other parts of the world and what was going on in religious institutions that that is usually forgotten fascinating well the next big chapter in the the work of Tom Hayden as an author is the your writings about work into work you would go on to no work to do community organizing part of the SDS strategy newark as they say exploded in 1967 massive unimaginable uprising you were in the middle of all that and the New York Review asked you to write about it this was a 90,000 word peace which was published in The New Yorker view with a very exciting cover I think it's the longest piece

the New York Review has ever published in its 50-year history how did this come to be and what was that piece like my reflection is that my writing may have changed in terms of melamine are deepening over 50 years but it's it's pretty much the same and it becomes well known writing or that it finds a mass

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known writing or that it finds a mass outlet only if that's useful to the editors of publications who are the arbiters of what's politically correct or culturally interesting so in 1967 the New York Times chose to write a column about me that said Thomas Emmett Hayden pragmatic radical very promising young man i guess that meant and so I became kind of like an icon of the new left because all phenomenon have to have two things have found in manifesto and a leader we didn't think so but that wasn't up to us it's like the same media establishment named The Beat Generation The Beat Generation they named the hippies the hippies and so on so I was named and then it happened that I was right in the center of this Newark rebellion and violence 20 26 people killed hundreds injured and I was one of the only people who was again recording the whole thing I was right there I saw people shot I talked in media you'd already been there for years so I've been knocking on doors I knew people you had an easy as a name I remember that's right i had acts therefore today to the lower depths of the ghetto where most of the events took place and so I was a source grand jury subpoenaed me they threatened me they try to take my notes and I don't remember how it went but I had a meeting in the middle of the night with the Governor of New Jersey and the leader of the core chapter Bob Kervin and we argued and negotiated to get the troops to leave much like Vietnam and they did leave in the morning partial withdrawal but for whatever for whatever reason I got noticed and and I got asked by the

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got noticed and and I got asked by the New York Review to to write a piece and I sat on a rooftop in New York and I just chopped it out a theory of how it happened and who died and so on no snipers utterly predictable and they published the whole thing and and the cop kind who I think he was an editor of something at the time as SAT with me and he asked me how Molotov cocktails are made and I drew one on a napkin and he took it to the editors and they drew this bomb a Molotov cocktail and they put it on the cover of this magazine so was this with Eurasian ille with your name under it well it was Tom Hayden rebellion in Newark by tom hayden and then Random House published the whole thing as a paperback book immediately and it was not that my writing was any better or any worse it was at that moment I was the man I've noticed this over 50 years where you go like this and then you'll rise and fall and wonder what's happening and a lot of it i think is out of our hands doesn't have anything to do with the quality of your work so what happened with that piece oh it's been used in Special Forces training academies for the US Army riot control who knows it's never been republished you can get it online community standard work in the history of urban insurrections which we've had many of in the past century after World war one world war 2 60's and it was just an attempt to make sense of why these things happen and to argue against the notion that they're unpredictable chaotic mob violence with no discernible pattern no logic to it we wanted to say yeah there's a logic to this because we wanted to get it over with one of the troops to leave and we had to predict the officials that the violence would go

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the officials that the violence would go down that it had come to a point where it was only the occupation by the military that was causing the violent reaction from the youth and if you removed the military the community wanted it was exhausted they wanted to heal they wanted to they had to go back to work they were losing their jobs are being thrown out of school so the book was an attempt to make sense of what most people prefer to believe is like senseless rioting 90,000 word peace on the cover of the New York Review of Books and yet you did not become a New York Review regular and when I was an activist I was a leader of anti-war and student struggles I didn't think of myself as wanting to be a New York Review regular I was pleased and still in pleased that there was space for this eyewitness account mm-hmm it wasn't my

writing necessarily it was that I was the eyewitness there was no other documentation like this I was there I was an organizer there and I had the information on how these 20 or 25 people were killed but I didn't get any subsequent offers if anything I was I don't want to sound self-pitying I was shunned by the New York Review and and I think it's simply because certain people came to believe that the new left had become too radical too far out too sympathetic to violence and shouldn't be encouraged it wasn't me that put a Molotov cocktail recovered I think they were having a flirtation with violence I knew very well what violence was about I had seen that firsthand and but I think I've always had that trouble I there's not there's not a lot of space in American writing for people who attempt to explain violence well we need

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attempt to explain violence well we need to talk about your writings about Vietnam and the Chicago conspiracy trial but first we need to take a short break afterwards and several other c-span programs are available for download as podcast visit book TV org more with Tom Hayden and John Wiener in a moment retirement deficits are approaching one trillion dollars former Wall Street Journal columnist Roger Lowenstein argues that pension concessions like those offered in the past by General Motors and the New York City Transit System are the cause he looks at our current financial future and present steps to secure the retirement of workers in while America aged while America aged sunday at five fifteen p.m. on c-span tues book TV afterwards with tom hayden and john weiner continues when we think of the sixties of course we think of vietnam you were one of the key leaders of the anti-war movement you went to Vietnam at the height of the American bombing and you wrote about that too let's talk about that well that's another example where the trip to Hanoi was an act of civil disobedience it was technically in violation of the State Department's laws and regulations and there was a challenge on the table and the the government chose not to try to indict us or imprison us and in addition to it being an act it was an attempt to break through a barrier

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attempt to break through a barrier because there had been no coverage of Vietnam nobody knew who the enemy was nobody knew north from South Viet Cong from mounts a tongue and and so my purpose was to write and I went with a member of the American Communist Party Herbert AB Dekker because he was able to make an arrangement with the North Vietnamese Communist Party and with my friends from civil rights days professor Staunton Lind a Quaker whose parents were sociologists and American Historians so so staunton and I wrote a book attempting to describe what we called the other side and as I look at it it seems to be overly romanticized but the the purpose i think was the same to to bring people in this country in connection with the other with the we have others who are always excluded from the mainstream politics and culture as if they can be handled by napalm in them or erasing them or keeping us ignorant of them as opposed to dialogue so that was the idea and and I never would have thought that 10 years of my life would be spent knowing Vietnam I had some kind of fatigue because I just went back to Vietnam for the first time in 32 years oh I brought my little boy I brought my wife and I was in pursuit of what I called the old revolutionaries I met several people who are all in their 80s who I had met first in 1965 just to see how they were doing and and how life had changed notes a country that's at peace for the first time ever diplomatic relations with the u.s. world trade organization members proud to have foreign investment and the average person is about 16 or 18 years old so

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person is about 16 or 18 years old so they're interested in the same gadgets and technology that our kids are and the old revolutionaries have the same problem of of trying to get the kids to remember the past and dwell on it a little bit and learn lessons from it and it's a very young country well it's shocking one of the things I think I've learned is that while you can write accurately and authentically and movingly I'm not sure that I or or many people who attempt it are successful with their powers of prediction do you know what I mean it is nothing ever turns out the way that you thought it was going to not Vietnam not life so the next chapter of your life is Chicago 68 the Democratic National Convention you're one of the key organizers of anti-war

demonstrations Nixon gets elected in November the you you are indicted at the big issues Nixon takes office one of the first things they do is indict you and your fellow organizers the trial takes up a big part of your life at a big part of the American five years that's right but is I understand that you didn't write about the trial at that point as far as i can tell at least from the tom hayden reader it wasn't really until you wrote your memoir reunion that you really take on the whole issue of the trial and what the trial was right at the time i wrote dispatches for a i think a defunct left-wing paper in New York the National Guardian we didn't have we had a few underground papers that was it not much on alternative radio and I did writing again at the trial I had the same schizophrenic experience of being in a

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schizophrenic experience of being in a defendant an activist anti-war and I was serving as basically the third lawyer I was constantly interviewing witnesses prepare the defense and trying to analyze how were we going to persuade the jury and if that failed how were we going to lay the foundation for an appeal how were we going to succeed in what seemed to be a very rigged judicial system so you were busy I was busy but the writing was actually it may be lost I don't know where the I couldn't find it but I did I did a lot of writing on the run and then I did some writing looking back of course and it's become extremely important to get that record straight because as you know we're in the 40th anniversary of this event and it soon will be in the 50th anniversary of everything that happened in the 60s and there's a fight going on you know was it worth the battle should the legacy be preserved was it all about nothing or will some of us be remembered so that others are forgotten their the approaches to the two memory are not outside of the the field of contestation let's say so I think it's important we keep engaged in the 50th anniversary of the 60s so that we can die a natural death many people have tried to kill us before the 60s have been pronounced dead but it's there it's quite alive and the presidential campaign it's the life everywhere so is keeping keeping some faith with what happened and telling the stories it's just as important as it was getting people to register to vote it

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getting people to register to vote it seems to me they if their story isn't told they're still voiceless so next chapter vietnam war ends in 1975 the the movement is in complete collapse at this point your old comrades go there different ways sort of what's going to happen now Jerry Rubin famously becomes a yuppie Abbie Hoffman eventually gets indicted for selling cocaine you made the decision when Ed Davis hooks up with a Indian the religious figure you made a different decision which was to run for office in the Democratic Party in California to join the system as we called it then this is a huge turning point in your own political life and it also turns out in your writing how did you decide to take that turn well everything gets characterized and simplified a little bit I mean abbie hoffman and jerry rubin and Randy Davis were more than those reductionist descriptions there was Dave Dellinger who remained a lifetime pacifist very active John Froines is a public health specialist at UCLA bill Kunstler lived on to fight many courtroom battles Len Wein glass remains one of my great friends today Lee whiner works in public relations for progressive causes and and I was I guess tagged as having entered the system right and and I never thought of that that way I thought of it as it was an exhibit the 60s were over we had

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was an exhibit the 60s were over we had won the big battles and that's why there was so much confusion and the war was over the draft had been eliminated and so on and I wanted to know how far you could take the Citizen Action and social movement perspective into the institutions before you were stopped was it true that you would sell out or not because we'd never been given the opportunity and I've been banging on these doors and it would seem a little ridiculous if the doors open and you said I never wanted to enter this place if it's ever anyway so I thought of it as an experiment unfortunately perhaps it lasted 18 years I was in office for a long time and I think that this was the sort of the responsible quote-unquote period of my life where I had a gavel right I was chairing committees all the time I in public policy responsibilities and my writing became a little more legalistic and a little more advocacy writing with a lot of pieces published in the LA Times as op-

eds on genetically engineered food or the you know Orange County financial scandal or the saving the salmon from from extinction because of pesticide use and and overfishing the higher education becoming a racket would so expensive that students were being forced out financially all these issues so the writing was tight was programmatic here's the problem here's the solution and then it was another time when I was in demand so to speak in the marketplace I could get op-ed pieces published all the time I never would have imagined that I would be in office for 18 years but I was till 2000 mm-hmm

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for 18 years but I was till 2000 mm-hmm some would say the best years of your life oh and the experiment was left inconclusive well you accomplished a lot and you also wrote a lot you got involved with gangs and thinking about gang violence at this time this was that was the outer perimeter of the possible remember the early essay i would say that i had to sacrifice attention to some controversial issues because there didn't seem to be any it wasn't that I was selling out so much as there wasn't any traction or leverage there well so I chose not to take up the the the war on drugs for example which i think is an expensive counterproductive wedge issue that that I should have taken up but because there was no easy legislative solution I couldn't get a bill out of committee I let that slide the the exception and and I'm not quite sure the explanation of it I think it has to do with my roots in newark in the south was I couldn't abide the demonizing of all young people as gang members all gang members as murderers or potential murderers suitable only for imprisonment that led to California being the largest incarceration center in the United States and the United States having twenty or thirty percent of the world's inmates amazing in politics of law and order were so successful politically that we were creating these huge side effects that will be with us so i tried a lot of his any things i hired some accident gang members on my staff I I tried to analyze programs that might help transform these young people into a

[00:42:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2520s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2520s)

help transform these young people into a positive and constructive rebels if they were going to be rebels as opposed to self-destructive and I think we had some success I think we actually changed the minds on the inside but but everybody thought I was out of my mind politically that they did not want to be tagged as soft on gangs or using tax dollars to hire ex-gang members even if they agreed privately it was for a worthy purpose so there I saw the limits of working within the system good people but calculating about what they had to do to survive and excluding certain issues altogether as somebody's business down the road but not the kind of issues they wanted to take up which meant if you didn't have outside forces external crises you might never get the attention of politicians he had to make it something that their constituencies care deeply about to get them activated you wrote a book about gangs and then you also got involved with Ireland another place with a history of violence Kyle make sense does warfare your your Ireland books one of my favorites well I got very interested in Ireland because in the late 60s after Chicago I felt like that had a lot of my American identity beaten out of me yeah and I had never been raised as an irish-american I was I was a white young man from the Midwest and and as the identity got taken away the women took their identity the blacks took their identity that Chicanos took theirs what was left was being a white man yeah which pretty boring yeah it's not not promising and so at just that moment I

[00:44:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2641s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2641s)

promising and so at just that moment I saw on television the civil rights marchers in Northern Ireland being hosed gassed and arrested and they were singing we shall overcome and and it's it had a stunning effect on me and not a born-again experience but stunning stunning because I realized that this was a missing part of my heritage and that they knew more about ourselves than I knew about them they were even borrowing and embracing and universalizing the song we shall overcome so I became very very interested I didn't think that my identity had been lost and I could just call up lost and found and get it back I thought was more likely that it was stolen in a subtle way gradually by my parents trying to blend in the university's discrediting any idea of Irish civilization and I searched that I tried to go to Ireland and I was prevented from going there because I

was seen as a revolutionary from America so it took me a long time but then I became very interested in the beginnings of the peace process and I renewed my old contacts from Ireland and for about 10 years I led on an additional life besides the legislature and family life I was constantly involved in trying to persuade the Clinton administration and do the right thing in Northern Ireland and constantly involved in trying to work to promote greater understanding of how there might be a peace deal that could be negotiated and once and for all move the island forward and these were very very important years I felt I was having useful effects but it was also quite important for my the reconstitution of

[00:46:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2760s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2760s)

important for my the reconstitution of who I was and I wrote a couple of books on the Irish Famine of the 1840s and another one called Irish on the inside it didn't get me anywhere in California politics I should have lived in in Boston New York Chicago or San Francisco but in west LA people were just like wondering what's with this guy yeah Tom focus that sort of thing so eventually you were termed out of the legislature you didn't get to be the mayor of LA 1999 you're no longer a lucky democratic party official there's some anti-globalization protest actually does I was out in two thousand but well you were still an elected leader showing a sign some of my young friends the children of the sixties generation came to me and said Tom Seattle you have got to go and what did this mean to you well I gradually tried to incorporate what it meant to me as a legislator and then later in terms of social movements what it meant is a legislature is that the World Trade Organization protocols took away from California sovereignty over a lot of legislative policy in agriculture in pesticides and environmentalism and anything that was considered a restraint on free corporate trade could be challenged and I commissioned a study and we found there were a hundred California laws some of which had been very involved in that would be on the block if we accepted this arrangement and these tribunals so I went up to say I went up to yes and yes Seattle and I was tear gassed I was I had no sense of the creative militancy of this new generation of students I'd seen them

[00:48:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2881s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=2881s)

generation of students I'd seen them percolating up yes in the environmental movement but this was really an extraordinary wave of demonstrations that actually stopped they wanted to end but they stopped the World Trade Organization in its tracks and caused a continuing reconsideration of what we're doing that is still reflected in today's presidential debates now I remain our effective I remember interviewing interviewing you on the radio right after those demonstrations and you were arguing at that point these demonstrations are better than anything we did in the 60s I think what I said is they were bigger than Chicago yeah and that they they had more immediate more immediate effect in the sense that they actually stopped the World Trade Organization temporarily but they stopped it from functioning stopped it from approving all of these onerous regulations when we tried to stop segregated lunch counters 30 years before we did but then they would reopen and it would be a long long process but in this case I thought you know when the when the dust cleared and the smoke settled and the tear gas was gone people would look at it more clearly and see and that a more secretive apparatus the WTO have been exposed and we had bought precious time for the American people and American institutions to consider what what is our role in the world you know are we trying to create a corporate Empire are we trying to roll back protections on health safety environment consumer products that were the achievements of past generations and I think it was very healthy the Seattle generation I'm afraid became derailed somewhat because of Iraq so we won't

[00:50:02 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3002s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3002s)

somewhat because of Iraq so we won't know what the Seattle generation would have become for that brief period though it was extremely powerful it was global and it's still around but until Iraq is really resolved I don't think you'll find enough attention here the evidence that it goes on is look at Latin America eight nine ten elections to the to the presidency in countries that used to be under dictatorships that were considered economic satellites of the United States whether it's Argentina Brazil Venezuela or a guai paraguay chill a that the list goes on these are all countries that have turned against what was transpiring in Seattle so it's by

no means over and I went to many of these places I went to the demonstrations in Miami I went to Cancun to the next effort at the WTO I went to Bolivia on a couple of occasions to investigate the rise of a peasant movement and the election of the first indigenous president of that country all very moving and interesting experiences that reminded me of Mississippi in the beginning but now the South was the whole global south and and it seemed to me a certain consistent pattern from the beginning to the end of my life at least my life so far your life so far for the last five years you've been very engaged with the Iraq war critiquing the Iraq war organizing against the Iraq war and writing about the Iraq war I have what do you see is the key the key issues in your writing in this period well I think I can be helpful because of my Vietnam

[00:52:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3121s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3121s)

I can be helpful because of my Vietnam experience that's why I chose it it reminds me of the days during Vietnam when they were there were moderates who said we can't just leave there's got to be negotiations now and then there were people who said no negotiations just get out and because no one could resolve the disagreements here the whole business collapsed horrific Lee and Americans were leaving on helicopters and genocide was being committed in Cambodia and so on so I do think a lot of attention has to be paid to the the reason why our government won't leave and more attention to what does it take for them to be compelled to leave I happen to think the election of a new president is a step but not the only step because this president wants to continue and to send it on to the to the to the future the the key finding is that the the president's the Congressional people the the powers that be see themselves as a superpower as an empire as number one and like Machiavelli the reputation of the government the reputation of the Pentagon is all important so they simply are unable to consider getting out a businessman on the other hand it might very well say who what's wrong with cutting our losses yeah like they're used to like leaving control chaos behind starting a new enterprise but those who represent the United States of America with capital letters think that they're representing our supremacy and so you have to find some way to protect their image to the extent possible while

[00:54:01 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3241s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3241s)

image to the extent possible while getting them out and I think the will of the people as expressed in voting it is an absolute essential but it's very revealing that it doesn't seem to be enough well let's talk about that a little more of both Democratic candidates say they want to draw down troops rapidly they sort of disagree on how many how soon what's your assessment of what one more what more you you would like to see well the difference between the Republicans and Democrats seems clear but as many taxi drivers have told me you should always vote for the guy that sounds like he's against you because he'll turn out to be right for you so you never know really what's going on here but there seems to be this sharp difference keep the war going and the war yeah but in those three words three little words and the war you find Hillary Clinton most of all Barack Obama somewhat has a a qualifier that there has to be a residual force for counterterrorism training Iraqis for embedding themselves with Iraqis for advising Iraqis protecting the embassy and so on and if you total it up you're talking between 10 and 30 thousand if you understand that there's a three-to-one multiplier in terms of the backup troops you need to support those troops you are at 50,000 minimum and it begins to look like counterinsurgency in Central America not an exit from Iraq whether this is election hyperbole whether this is reality is remains to be seen but but you know my experience is that civil society and public opinion and

[00:56:00 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3360s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3360s)

civil society and public opinion and voters count if only because the politicians have to come around every four years and they have to seek seek our votes and having a mandate for peace this November just as there was a mandate for peace in november two thousand six is a very important contribution that we can make the rest is to find ways to compel them to get out sooner rather than later my worst estimate is that it will be with us another five or eight years and I say that because Dan Ellsberg wrote from his experience in the Pentagon and with Pentagon Papers that the purpose of the executive branch of the establishment is not

to lose and so they will escalate enough to not lose and pass the poison pill of the war on to the next administration who will learn that they dare not lose and who therefore will do whatever it takes to keep it going to pass it on again there has to be an adult alternative I would say but I don't know who in our establishment has the wisdom to see that this actually is a threat to our democracy and our standing in the world and it's better to seize the diplomatic initiative bargain with Iran talk to the neighboring countries but you're not going to get anywhere unless you announce that you actually plan to leave you're going to abandon the occupation the UN isn't even going to support the occupation after December our allies have virtually all left the British I think have 1500 outside an air base there's there's not there's no there there and yet the image of something there is is what the

00:58:01 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azNadJ6MkC4&t=3481s>)

of something there is is what the president is trying to promote and you'll notice the Democrats are are vague Obama's clearest 16-month withdrawal of combat troops but his advisers say leave 30,000 behind well that's up to Iraq my question is from military point of view would be how would you do better with 30,000 Americans there if you failed to win with 150,000 these are questions to take up next year well Tom I'm sorry we're out of time thanks for talking with us today thanks John always

END